

Chapter 8. LANDSCAPING

8.1 Purpose and Intent

This chapter is intended to establish minimum standards for the design of landscapes so as to improve the City aesthetically, economically and environmentally.

This chapter improves the appearance of the City through the provision of trees and landscaping in order to better control soil erosion; reduce the hazards of flooding; stabilize the ground water tables; absorb carbon dioxide; supply oxygen; provide shade for cooling; screen noise and incompatible uses, dust, glare; and preserve, protect and enhance the natural environment.

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In addition, this chapter is guided by and intends to fulfill the following policy directives of the *Salisbury Vision 2020 Comprehensive Plan*:

- *Large trees, ponds, creeks or other natural features of the landscape should be saved when locating new streets, buildings, parking lots, etc.*
- *In planning for new mixed use development, large-scale uses shall be buffered from adjacent residential areas by smaller scale buildings or by buffer strips. Industries adjoining existing residential uses shall provide and maintain for adequate screening and buffering.*
- *Industries located along the city's major travel corridors shall provide for landscaping that enhances the city's overall image.*
- *Landscaping, and where possible, street trees should be planted in central median and plaza [or planting] strips of major streets.*
- *Consistent street tree species shall occur along predetermined sections of streets. The planting or preservation of street trees of appropriate size shall be required as part of the upfront costs of new development.*
- *The City shall encourage appropriate landscaping and reconfiguration of large, un-landscaped parking areas.*

8.2 Applicability

- A. The provisions of this chapter shall apply to new construction and development. New development of an individual single-family or duplex dwelling that is not part of a larger common plan of development is exempt from the provisions of this chapter.
- B. The provisions of this chapter shall not apply to existing developed properties (prior to the effective date of this Ordinance) unless one of the following occurs:
 - 1. An existing parking lot (paved or unpaved) is expanded or improved to add 12 or more spaces. If a parking lot is expanded, then Planting Yard, Street Yard, Planting Yard, and parking lot requirements shall be applicable.

2. An existing principal structure is expanded by 25% or more. The landscaping improvements are required for the expanded portion of existing development only.

8.3 General Provisions

- A. **Existing Vegetation, Fences, Walls, and Berms:** The use of existing trees or shrubs to satisfy the landscaping requirements of this chapter is strongly encouraged. Significant existing vegetation within landscaped areas shall be preserved and credited towards required landscaping. Existing berms, walls, or fences within the landscaped area, but not including chain link fencing, may be used to fulfill the standards for the type of landscaping required, provided that these elements are in a condition of good repair.
- B. **Protection of Vegetation during Design:** Through the protection of trees and existing vegetation, the City encourages new development to be creative in design and placement of buildings, structures, parking and other impervious surfaces as to preserve natural features and to complement the existing topography when practical.
- C. **Installation of New Vegetation and Other Features:** New plant material should complement existing vegetation. If existing significant vegetation and other site features do not fully meet the standards for the type of landscaping required, then additional vegetation and/or site features (including fences) shall be planted or installed within the required landscaping area.
- D. **Grading in Required Landscape Areas:** If grading within a planting yard is proposed, slopes of 3:1 or less are encouraged to ensure the proper transition of grades to the adjacent property and to facilitate landscaping and maintenance.
- E. **Easements & Right-of-Ways:** Nothing shall be planted or installed within an underground or overhead utility easement or a drainage easement without the consent of the Administrator and the easement holder at the time of site plan approval.
- F. **Tree Replacement:** Should any tree chosen for preservation or one required for a landscaping area, planting strip or planting yard die, the owner shall replace it within 180 days with a tree(s) of a size equal, or equivalent point value, to the assigned credit of the original tree.
- G. **Building Setbacks:** Building placement within allowable setbacks may supersede Planting Yard width requirements; however, there shall be no net loss of required Planting Yard material or points.

8.4 Landscape Plan

- A. Applicability:** A Landscape Plan shall be required for a proposed development prior to any land disturbance. (This does not include predevelopment site grading, which is permitted by the provisions of Sections 4.5 and 15.5.) The Landscape Plan shall contain the information detailed in Section 16.10, Landscape Plan Requirements.
- B. Revisions to Approved Landscape Plans:** Due to lack of plant availability, approved landscape plans may require minor revisions. Minor revisions to landscape plans may be approved by the Administrator if:
1. There is no reduction in the quantity of plant material.
 2. There is no significant change in size or location of plant materials.
 3. The new plants are of the same general category (i.e., shade trees, ornamental trees, shrubs, groundcover) and have the same general design characteristics (mature height, crown spread) as the materials being replaced

8.5 Credits for Tree Protection & Preservation

A. Applicability and General Provisions

1. Credits for tree preservation are offered when a tree preservation plan is submitted prior to grading the site.
2. A tree protection plan, showing there will be no disturbance in the Critical Root Zone (CRZ) shall be submitted prior to grading. Trenching, placing backfill, driving, or parking equipment in the CRZ, and the dumping of materials detrimental to plant health in close proximity of the trees to be preserved is prohibited.

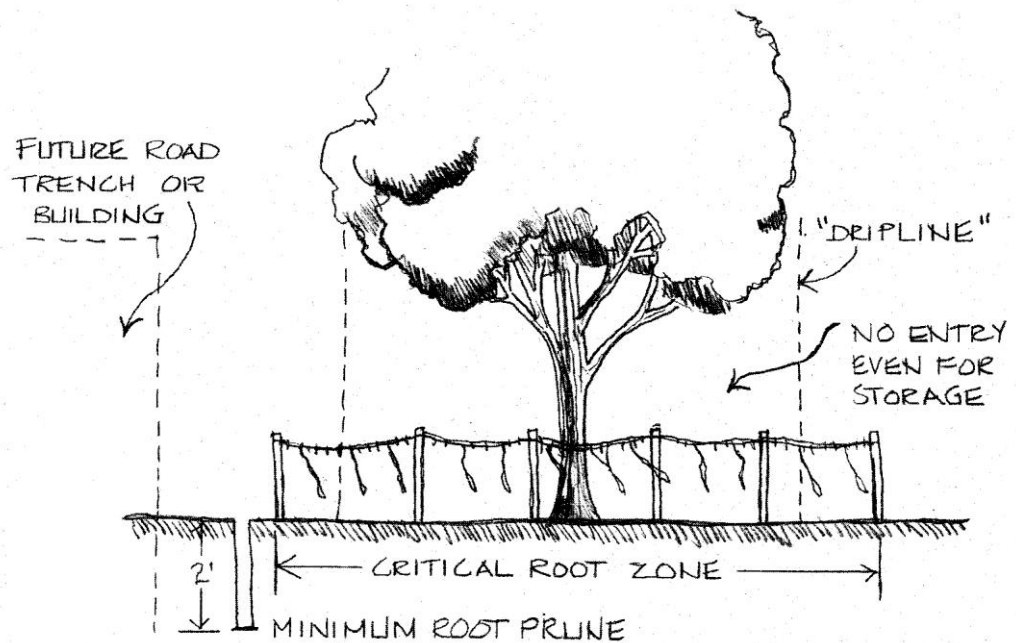
B. Landscape Credits for Tree Preservation

1. Minimum size requirement to qualify for tree preservation is 4 inches (DBH).
2. Landscape credits for existing trees within Planting Yards will be given at the rate of 12 points per 4 inches in diameter at breast height (DBH) of existing plant preserved. (See Section 8.6 for details on points for landscaping.)

C. Preservation of Existing Vegetation During Construction

1. Protective barricades shall be placed around all trees designated to be saved, prior to the start of development activities or grading. The following is recommended:
 - a. Barricades may consist of 2"x 4" posts with 1"x 4" rails, orange safety fence, or a similar treatment and shall remain in place until development activities are complete.

- b. The barricaded area shall remain free of all building materials, stockpiled soil or other construction debris.
- c. Construction traffic, storage of vehicles and materials, and grading shall not take place within the protective areas of the existing trees.
- d. Barricades shall be erected at a recommended minimum distance from the base of protected trees according to the following standards:
 - (1) **For trees 10" or less in caliper:** Place at a minimum distance of 10' from the base of each protected tree, or outside the dripline, whichever is greater.
 - (2) **For trees greater than 10" in caliper:** Place at a minimum distance equal to 10' from the base of a protected tree plus an additional 1' for each additional 1" in caliper greater than 10" in caliper, or outside the dripline, whichever is greater.



Pre-construction tree protection techniques and concepts.

- 2. Construction access to a site should occur where an existing or proposed entrance/exit is located.
- 3. Land disturbance within a tree dripline is discouraged except for driveway access points, sidewalks, curb and gutter.
- 4. Where grading within a tree dripline cannot be avoided, cut and fill shall be limited to $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ of the area within the dripline, and tree roots shall be pruned with clean cuts at the edge of the disturbed area. (No fill shall be placed within the dripline of a tree without venting to allow air and water to reach the roots.)

5. Storage of construction materials and any other construction activities that contribute to the compaction should be limited to areas of the site within the limits of construction.

8.6 Planting Yards

The landscaping regulations established in this section are intended to minimize potential conflicts between abutting developments, to eliminate or minimize potential nuisances such as dirt, litter, noise, glare of lights, signs, and unsightly buildings or parking areas, and to ensure adequate landscaping in new development. New single family and/or duplex development that is part of a larger common plan is exempt from the provisions of this section.

A. Required Planting Yards

Planting yards shall be required for any development or expansion of existing development. The planting yard may be a Perimeter or Flexible Planting Yard as described below.

1. Perimeter Planting Yards

The purpose of Perimeter Planting Yards is to ensure that a natural area of appropriate size and density of plantings is located between certain zoning districts. (See white boxes in table below)

- a. Perimeter Planting Yards require a specific width, type of plant material, and quantity of plant material.
- b. In a mixed-use development, the interior boundaries of abutting outparcels are not required to meet the Planting Yard requirements.

2. Flexible Planting Yards

The intent of the Flexible Planting Yards is to provide for landscaping of new development or redevelopment, but to allow for creativity and flexibility in the placement of the landscaping throughout development sites rather than simply at the perimeter. (See gray boxes in table below)

Developers shall provide throughout the site the square footage of landscape area and number of landscape required points that would be equivalent to a Type-A planting yard along the side and rear portions of the parcel (see 8.6.B, Planting Yard types). Required planting in street yards and of street trees shall not count toward the required minimum landscaping.

		Adjacent District							
		OSP RR	GR	HR UR MHD	RMX IC	HS NMX TND CMX	DMX	HB LI	HI
District of Proposed Development	OSP RR	A ₁	A ₁	A ₁	A ₁	A ₁	A ₁	A ₁	A ₁
	GR	C	A ₁	A ₁	A ₁	A ₁	A ₁	A ₁	A ₁
	HR UR MHD	C	B	A ₁	A ₁	A ₁	A ₁	A ₁	A ₁
	RMX IC	D ₂	C	B	A ₁	A ₁	A ₁	A ₁	A ₁
	HS TND NMX CMX	E ₂	D ₃	C	B	A ₁	A ₁	A ₁	A ₁
	DMX	C ₄	B ₄	A _{1,4}	A _{1,4}	A _{1,4}	A _{1,4}	A _{1,4}	A _{1,4}
	HB LI	F ₂	F ₂	C	B	B	A	A	A ₁
	HI	F ₂	F ₂	D ₂	C	C	B	B	A ₁

Yard	Perimeter or Flexible Planting Yard Required	Yard	Perimeter Planting Yard Required
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NOTES:

1. Flexible Planting Yard as specified in 8.6.A.2.

No planting yard is required for single-family or duplex developments.

2. Complete visual separation required through the use of densely planted vegetation that would provide complete visual separation within three (3) years of planting or a six foot fence (constructed of masonry or pressure treated lumber). In either case, the requirements of the table above shall be met for the corresponding planting yard. Visual separation is not required where connectivity (for motor vehicles and/or non-motorized modes) between land uses is planned or provided.

3. Planting yard required for the non-residential and/or multi-family portion of mixed use developments only.

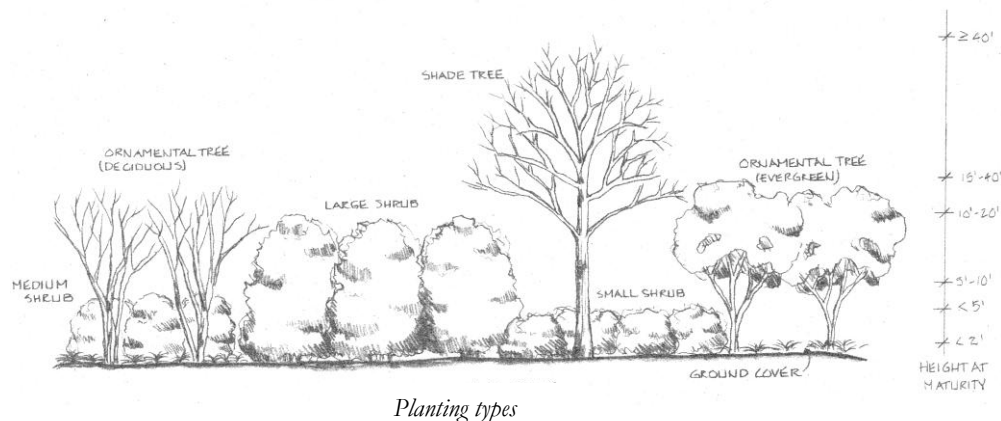
4. In the DMX district, a maximum of 15% of the total lot area shall be required to meet the Planting Yard provisions.

B. Planting Yard Types

Each Planting Yard has a specified width, type of plant material and quantity of plant material which is required. The width and density of the Planting Yard increases as the difference in zoning classifications increases.

Yard Type	Minimum Width	Trees *		Shrubs	Required points per linear foot
		Shade	Orn.		
A	8'	n/a	1/100'	Optional	0.4
B	10'	1/100' (b)	N/A	Optional	0.6
C	15'	1/75'	1/100'	Optional	0.7
D	20'	1/50'	1/100'	Optional	0.8
E	25'	1/50'	1/75'	Optional	0.9
F	30'	1/50'	1/50'	Optional	1.0
* rounded to the nearest whole number; if 1/2, then round upward					
** The planting yard requirement for the Type A Yard shall be a minimum average width of 8 feet, but at no time shall the width be less than four (4) feet.					

Points for Planting Yards	
Planting Type	Points
Shade Tree	12
Ornamental Tree	6
Large Shrub	3
Medium Shrub	2
Small Shrub	1



1. In Type B Planting Yards, Ornamental Trees may be substituted for Shade Trees at the rate of two (2) Ornamental Trees for each required Shade Tree.
2. **Conflict with Utility Lines:** In the case of a conflict with utility lines, one (1) Ornamental Tree may be substituted for each required Shade Tree if approved by the Administrator or his designee and corresponding utility service(s).
3. **Landscape Credits:** Landscape credits for existing trees within Planting Yards will be given at the rate of 12 points per 4 inches in diameter at breast height (DBH) of existing plant material preserved.

8.7 Street Yards

A Street Yard consists of a planting area parallel to a public right-of-way but on private property, typically between the sidewalk and new development, designed to provide continuity of vegetation along the right-of-way and to soften the impact of development by providing a pleasing view from the road.

- A. **Applicability:** Street Yards shall be provided in all districts, except the OSP, RR, DMX, GR, UR, HR, TND, and MHD, where a front setback greater than 10 feet is provided.
- B. **Minimum Width:** Street Yards shall be a minimum of eight feet wide.
- C. **Required Trees:** Street Yards shall contain one Shade Tree per 35 linear feet (or fraction thereof) except in areas of conflict with existing overhead utility lines, where Ornamental Trees shall be planted at one per 25 linear feet (or fraction thereof).
- D. **Tree Spacing:** Trees shall be distributed along the street frontage, but they are not required to be at equal intervals. This will allow for flexibility in design while discouraging long intervals without trees.
- E. No more than 20% of the Street Yard may be used for walkways or signs.
- F. Parking, merchandise display and off-street loading are prohibited in the Street Yard.
- G. All trees in Street Yards shall be planted no closer than four (4) feet from any public right-of way.

8.8 Street Trees

Street trees shall be planted in the street right-of-way as specified in the table below and Section 4.7, Street Design and Layout Provisions. Spacing of trees should allow for a clear view of buildings and land uses.

Transect Zone	T-1	T-2	T-3	T-4	T-5	T-6	Assigned Districts
Zoning Districts	OSP	RR	GR MHD	UR HR RMX	NMX CMX TND	DMX	HB, HS, IC LI, HI
Street Tree Requirement	No	No	Yes	Yes, in UR & HR	Yes, in TND	No	No
Street Tree Location (required or voluntary)	n/a	n/a	Planting strip	Dependent on Street Section	Dependent on Street Section	Tree well	n/a

- A. **Applicability:** Street trees shall apply to newly constructed and reconstructed streets.
- B. Planting strips shall have a minimum width of six (6) feet.
- C. Shade trees shall be installed at an average distance of 40 feet on-center. Where overhead utilities exist prior to development, ornamental trees shall be substituted at an average distance of 25 feet on-center.
- D. Street trees shall be placed at least eight (8) feet from light poles and ten feet from electrical transformers in order to allow these utilities to be safely serviced.
- E. Along state maintained streets, such plantings shall comply with NCDOT standards.

8.9 Landscape Standards for Parking Lots

A. Applicability:

1. All properties with new parking lots of 12 or more spaces or expanded lots (to add 12 or more spaces) shall be required to obtain a zoning permit and to comply with this section and the requirements for Planting Yards (Section 8.6) and Street Yards (Section 8.7).
2. Existing parking lots (paved or unpaved) that are expanded or improved to add 12 or more spaces shall comply with the landscaping requirements of this section within the expanded or improved portion only.

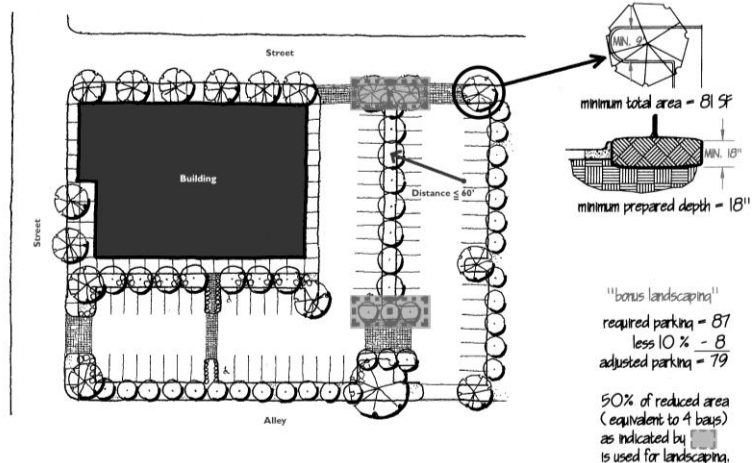
B. Planting Yards:

1. If a perimeter planting yard is not otherwise required or provided around new or expanded parking lots, a Type-A planting yard shall be provided along the perimeter portion of parking lots that abut an adjacent property. These points may contribute towards the overall yard requirement.
2. Parking lot connections up to 24-feet wide between adjacent properties shall be exempt from the Planting Yard requirements.

- C. Street Frontages:** Parking areas located along a street frontage shall have the portion of the lot that fronts the street screened up to a height of 3 feet using shrubs, brick walls (using brick that matches the adjacent building), wrought iron-type fencing, or any combination thereof. There shall be no openings in the screening greater than 2 feet except openings for pedestrian passage, which should be at least 5 feet in width. If landscaping is used, the minimum planting area width shall not be less than 4 feet. Where a street yard is provided, per Section 8.7, no additional landscape width beyond the width of the street yard shall be required. However, screening requirements shall be met within the street yard area.

D. Interior Parking Lot Landscaping:

1. In parking lots with 12 or more spaces, trees shall be planted at a rate of one Shade Tree or two Ornamental Trees for every 12 spaces or fraction thereof.



Parking lot landscaping

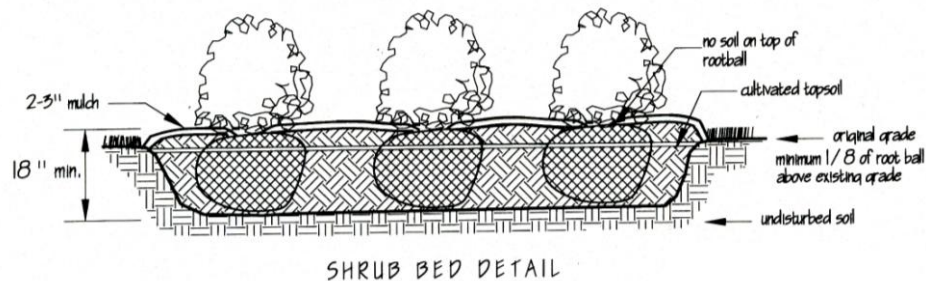
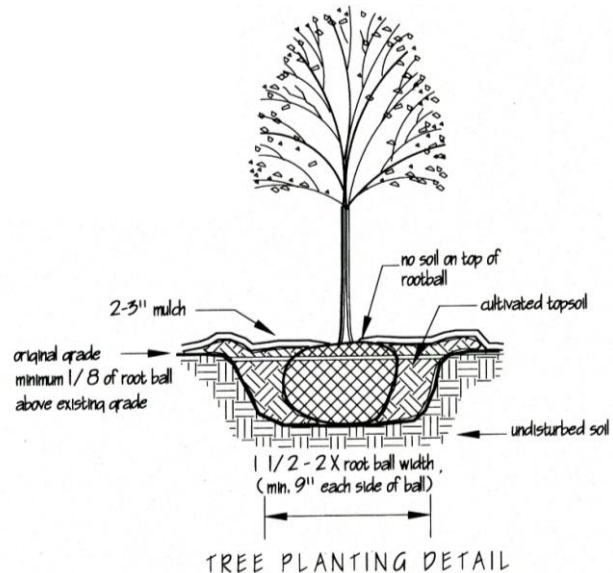
2. Required trees shall be located within or adjacent to parking lots as tree islands, medians, at the end of parking bays, traffic delineators, or between rows or parking spaces in a manner such that no parking space is located more than 60 feet from a parking lot tree.
3. Trees located within the Planting Yards or Street Yards cannot be credited toward the parking lot requirements.
4. Planting Areas within the parking lots shall provide a minimum of 81 square feet with a minimum inside dimension of nine (9) feet and a minimum prepared depth of 18 inches (see image on preceding page).
5. Any parking lot containing 20 or more parking spaces may reduce the number of required parking spaces by as much as 10% if 50% of the reduced area is used for parking lot landscaping, with no landscaped area less than the minimum required parking lot planting area (see example in image above). This bonus landscaping shall apply to non-residential uses in RMX, NMX, CMX, DMX, HB, LI, HI, HS, and IC districts only.

8.10 Landscape Standards and Specifications

- A. The developer shall furnish and install all plant materials listed on the plan schedule.
- B. Plant materials shall conform to the requirements described in the latest edition of American Standard for Nursery Stock, which is published by the American Association of Nurserymen.
- C. Plant materials shall be from an approved species list or approved by the Administrator or his designee.
- D. Shade Trees shall be minimum 2-inch caliper or larger at the time of planting. Ornamental Trees shall be a minimum of 6' in height at the time of planting (i.e., six feet from top of root ball to top of tree).
- E. No tree may be planted in the Sight Triangle (see Section 4.7.I, Intersections) without the prior approval of the Administrator.
- F. Do not use staking materials unless it is absolutely necessary. If staking is necessary, then the developer/property owner shall remove the staking materials after one growing season.
- G. The Administrator or his designee may be consulted to determine the proper time to move and install plant material so that stress to the plant is minimized. A temporary Certificate of Occupancy may be issued when extremes in weather or soil conditions are not favorable to landscaping.

- H. The developer shall ensure that all plant pits, vine pits, hedge trenches, and shrub beds are excavated as follows:

1. All pits shall be generally circular in outline, with vertical sides. The tree pit shall be deep enough to allow one-eighth of the ball to be above existing grade. Soil within the Planting Areas shall be free of rock, debris, inorganic compositions and chemical residues detrimental to plant life. Soil shall be compatible with the composition of the existing sub-soil and sufficiently blended to ensure adequate exchange of air and water between the Planting Area and the adjacent soil strata. Plants shall rest on well-compacted surface. The tree pit shall be a minimum of nine inches larger on every side than the ball of the tree.
2. If areas are designated as shrub beds or hedge trenches, they shall be cultivated to at least 18 inches in depth. Areas designated for Ground Covers and Vines shall be cultivated to at least 12 inches in depth.



- I. Each tree, shrub, or vine shall be pruned in an appropriate manner, in accordance with accepted standard practice.
- J. All trenches and shrub beds shall be edged and cultivated to the lines shown on the drawings. The areas around isolated plants shall be edged and cultivated to the full diameter of the pit.
- K. Existing trees shall be preserved whenever possible (see Section 9.3).
- L. All Planting Areas shall be mulched with a two-to-three inch layer of bark, pine needles, or other similar material to cover the complete Planting Area.

8.11 Alternate Methods of Compliance

Alternate landscaping plans, plant materials, or planting methods may be used where unreasonable or impractical situations would result from application of landscaping requirements, or where necessary to protect existing vegetation. Such situations may result from streams, natural rock formations, topography, or other physical conditions; or from lot configuration, utility easements, unified development design, or unusual site conditions.

A. Approval of Alternate Plan

The applicable approval authority may approve an alternate plan which proposes different plant materials or methods provided that the quality, effectiveness, durability, and performance are equivalent to that required by this Ordinance.

B. Appeal

Decisions of the applicable approval authority regarding alternate methods of compliance may be appealed to the Zoning Board of Appeals.

C. Non-Compliance

In the event of a taking of right-of-way that puts a property in non-compliance, the property shall come back into compliance as it was previous to the taking. If coming into compliance presents a hardship for the property owner, then the property owner may present an alternate method of compliance.

8.12 Plant Substitution

Due to seasonal planting problems and a lack of plant availability, approved landscape plans may require minor revisions. Minor revisions to planting plans may be approved by the Administrator or designee if:

- A.** There is no reduction in the quantity of plant material.
- B.** There is no significant change in size or location of plant materials.
- C.** The new plants are of the same general category (i.e., Shade Tree, Ornamental Tree, Evergreen, or Shrub) and have the same general design characteristics (mature height, crown spread) as the materials being replaced.